REMARKS

The Office Action mailed September 5, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 10 to 65 are pending in this application, with claims 10, 54, and 60 being the independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as amended, and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

It is noted that the file does not contain a Patent Drawing Review by the Patent Office Draftsperson. It is requested that this Review be undertaken and a Review by the Draftsperson be issued in response to this Amendment.

The claims have been amended to clarify their wording.

In the Office Action mailed September 5, 2003 (paragraph 5), independent claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,820,935 ("Kashiwabara").

The present invention as recited in amended independent claims 10, 54 and 60 each requires that the rod rotates in the cradle in contact with a coating surface layer adhered to a surface of the cradle on which said rod rotates, and that the coating surface layer is of a material which improves wear resistance and sliding friction properties of the cradle and said rod.

Kashiwabara discloses a rod holder wherein the rod is rotating in a cavity of the rod holder. Coating liquid is fed into the cavity and the pressure of the liquid is so high that a hydrodynamic liquid layer, on which the rod rotates and which supports the rod, is formed between the rod and the cavity (col. 2, lines 16-24, for example). Kashiwabara teaches that the bar is floated from the support member in the widthwise direction so that it does not contact the support member at all (col. 11, lines 48 to 51) and that a gap between the support member and the rod is always filled with coating liquid (col. 6, lines 40-43). With this arrangement no friction is generated between the bar and the support member (see col. 11, lines 48-53). It is not clear why Kashiwabara suggests that the surface of the support member is coated with plastic material so as to reduce coefficient of friction against the bar (col. 8, lines 34-43) in view of the fact that the bar does not contact this surface. It may be that the coating layer is intended to reduce the wear on the support surface caused by abrasive particles of the coating liquid.

In the invention as recited in amended independent claims 10, 54 and 60, the bar is in contact with a coating layer adhered to a surface of the cradle. The adhered coating layer reduces the friction between the rod and the cradle whereas in Kashiwabara the same problem is

solved by the hydrodynamic liquid layer. For this reasons, amended independent 10 claim is not anticipated by Kashiwabara, and that rejection should be withdrawn.

In the Office Action (paragraph 10), independent claim 60, and dependent claims 11 to 13, 18 to 21, 30 to 33, 37, 42 to 45, 49 and 61 to 65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kashiwabara in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,695,004 ("Montgomery") and U.S. Patent No. 5,108,813 ("Noda"). However, neither Montgomery nor Noda supply the elements recited in amended independent 60 that are missing from Kashiwabara, as discussed above with reference to amended independent claim 10. For these reasons, this rejection should be withdrawn.

In the Office Action (paragraph 11), independent claim 60, and dependent claims 12, 18, 30, 36, 42, 48 and 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kashiwabara in view of Noda. Again, Noda does not supply the elements recited in amended independent 60 that are missing from Kashiwabara, as discussed above with reference to amended independent claim 10. For these reasons, this rejection should be withdrawn.

In the Office Action (paragraph 13), independent claims 10 and 54, and dependent claims 11 to 17, 22 to 25, 42 to 47, 50, 51, 55 to 57 and 59 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,729,192 ("Warner") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,839,024 ("Demo") and optionally U.S. Patent No. 4,596,611 ("Dawes").

Warner discloses a doctoring apparatus wherein the rod is rotated in a cradle. Only the rod is coated with chromium layer against the wear caused by the abrasive particles of the coating liquid (col. 4, lines 61-69). The Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to also coat the socket surface with a suitable coating layer, as suggested by Demo, so as to improve the wear resistance of the cradle.

Warner teaches that the speed of rotation of the rod is advantageously slow and need be only enough to keep the rod in continuous motion (col. 3, lines 65 to 71). Due to the slow rotation speed of the rod, the wear of the cradle surface and the friction between the rod and the cradle surface are not problems in the apparatus of Warner. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art would have had no incentive to apply the teaching of Demo to the cradle surface of the apparatus of Warner. Dawes does not supply what is missing from Warner relative to amended independent claims 10 and 54, or a combination of Warner with Demo. Nor does the Office Action provide a suggestion or teaching to combine these references in the way that is

suggested in the Office Action. Thus, a prima facie case of obviousness has not been made. For these reasons, this rejection should be withdrawn.

For these reasons, amended independent claims 10, 54 and 60 are patentable. The dependent claims are patentable for the same reasons that the independent claims are patentable. Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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